

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Gumbel Building

AND/OR COMMON

Gumbel Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

801 Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF

#5 Hon. Richard L. Bolling

STATE

Missouri

CODE
64106

COUNTY

Jackson

CODE

095

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
___ STRUCTURE
___ SITE
___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
___ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
___ IN PROCESS
___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
___ UNOCCUPIED
___ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES, RESTRICTED
___ YES, UNRESTRICTED
___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE
☒ COMMERCIAL
___ EDUCATIONAL
___ ENTERTAINMENT
___ GOVERNMENT
___ INDUSTRIAL
___ MILITARY
___ MUSEUM
___ PARK
___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ RELIGIOUS
___ SCIENTIFIC
___ TRANSPORTATION
___ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Jeanette McDonald Groves

STREET & NUMBER

5353 Ward Parkway

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64112

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.Office of the Recorder of Deeds
Jackson County Courthouse, Kansas City Annex

STREET & NUMBER

415 East 12th Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Missouri 64106

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Preliminary Inventory of Architecture and Historic Sites.

DATE

1974

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Missouri 64106

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GUMBEL BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Historic Kansas City Architecture.

1975

local

City Hall, 26th Floor E.

414 East 12th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64106

3. Kansas City, A Place in Time.

1977

local

City Hall, 26th Floor E.

414 East 12th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64106

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. Mr. James M. Denny (State Contact Person)

Department of Natural Resources

December 6, 1977

Office of Historic Preservation

P.O. Box 176

314/751-4096

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gumbel Building, 801 Walnut Street, in Kansas City's Central Business District, is situated on a sloping, corner location. The six-story rectangular building is oriented with its main facade facing west. It has a frontage of 72 feet on Walnut Street and 110 feet on Eighth Street.

The building is divided into three horizontal divisions: 1) the first floor; 2) the second through fifth floors, and; 3) the sixth floor and cornice.

The first floor originally had a corner entrance as well as an entrance on the east facade. The corner entrance has been removed and the entire first floor modernized by the addition of plate glass display windows. The main entrance on the east facade is recessed, off center to the right, and marked by red marble pilasters. Another entrance is located at the east end of the north facade. A cornice with a drip mold divides the first and second floors.

The middle division of the building is the most ornate. This section is marked by square piers at the corners of the building. Where these piers join the fifth floor, ornate terra cotta work, topped with Roman eagles, is featured. The west and north facades of this section are faced with terra cotta and fenestrated with three-part "Chicago" style windows, set in slightly recessed bays. The piers between the windows are ornate and rounded, suggesting Roman fasces, the bundle of rods symbolic of power. These rounded piers terminate at the top of the fifth floor with ornate composite capitals surmounted by a decorative shield and wreath motif. A decorative string course with a drip mold separates the fifth and sixth floors.

The top division of the building continues the squared corner piers. Recessed "Chicago" style windows are used, separated by squared piers. An ornate Italianate copper cornice completes the building. The east and south facades of the building are faced with brick and fenestrated with paired rectangular windows. The terra cotta and brick facades of the building conceal its reinforced concrete construction, with iron columns and skeleton steel front and sides. The building was reinforced with wire cable, rather than the more common reinforcement bars. A cinder aggregate was used to reduce the weight of the concrete, but the building was constructed of sufficient strength to allow the addition of two stories in the future, although this has not been done. The expanded metal floors were covered with terrazzo and slate was used for the baseboards. All precautions were taken to make this building fireproof. Fifty-six thousand square feet of floor space are contained in the building.¹

FOOTNOTES

1. Western Contractor, 20 May 1903, p. 1.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

John W. McKecknie

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gumbel Building, 801 Walnut, in Kansas City's Central Business District, is significant in that it is one of the earliest examples of reinforced concrete construction in the country. John W. McKecknie, the designer, was a significant Kansas City architect and a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete construction.

Reinforced concrete was apparently introduced into the United States in 1870 by Ernest Ransome, superintendent of the Pacific Stone Company of San Francisco. In 1884 he acquired a patent on the use of twisted iron rods to reinforce concrete. The advantage to this means of construction was to eliminate the wall mass, substituting a framework of columns and floors, making possible large window areas. Early reinforced concrete buildings hid the means of construction by terra cotta slabs. Not until the Cincinnati architects, Elzner and Anderson, built the Terminal Warehouse in Kansas City in 1905, was the concrete exposed, displaying an interest in the aesthetic values of the material.

Skyscraper construction in steel had gained wide popularity in the United States because of its rapid assembly techniques. Reinforced concrete was touted as an alternative with proponents noting certain construction advantages. As each floor hardened, it could become the formwork of the floor above, decreasing the cost of scaffolding and proving an invaluable saver of space on sites bordered by busy streets. By 1905, textbooks on the principles of reinforced concrete construction appeared.¹

In this context, the Gumbel Building of 1904 is clearly one of the earliest tall, reinforced concrete buildings, and John W. McKecknie a significant early user of this technique.²

McKecknie was born in Clarksville, Ohio, in 1862 and spent his early life in Wilmington, Ohio. He graduated from Princeton University in 1888 and then continued his architectural studies at Columbia University, New York. He came to Kansas City in 1896 and opened an architectural office. In 1915 he formed a partnership with Frank E. Trask, the firm being known as McKecknie and Trask. McKecknie died in 1934. Other examples of McKecknie's reinforced concrete work in Kansas City are the Montgomery Ward and Company Building of 1908 at the southwest corner of Nineteenth and Campbell Streets, and the Gloyd Building, 921 Walnut Street, of 1909.³

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GUMBEL BUILDING

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The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan." The Gumbel Building, therefore, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Architecture," "Economics," and "Technology."

FOOTNOTES

1. Peter Collins, Concrete, The Vision of A New Architecture (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), pp. 63 and 86-87.
2. Donald Hoffmann, "Early Concrete Construction in Kansas City," Skylines and Midwest Architect, 15 (Dec.-Jan. 1965): 13-22.
3. Kansas City [Missouri] Star, 20 October 1934, p. 2.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Collins, Peter. Concrete, The Vision of a New Architecture, London: Faber and Faber, 1959.
2. Hoffman, Donald "Early Concrete Construction in Kansas City." Skylines and Midwest Architect, 15 (Dec.-Jan. 1965): 13-22. (cntd.)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 363240 4329350
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

ALL E OF E LI WALNUT LOTS 80 81 AND 82 ROSS AND SCARRITTS ADD

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Sherry Piland, Researcher

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri

DATE

December 6, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

26th Floor East, City Hall, 414 E. 12th Street

TELEPHONE

(816) 274-2555

CITY OR TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Missouri 64106

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources
and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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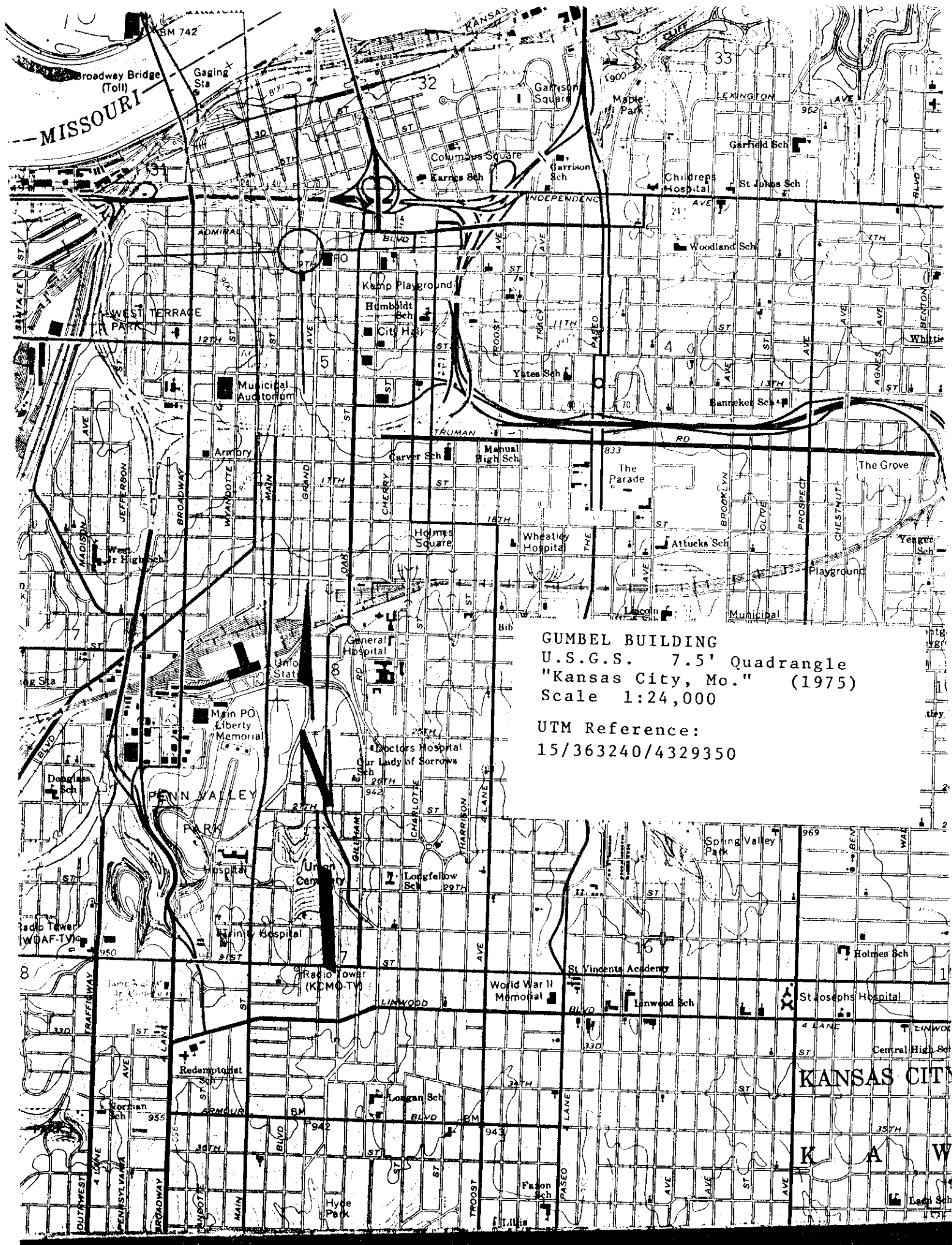
GUMBEL BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

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3. Kansas City [Missouri] Star, 20 October 1934.
4. Western Contractor, 20 May 1903.



GUMBEL BUILDING
U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
"Kansas City, Mo." (1975)
Scale 1:24,000

UTM Reference:
15/363240/4329350

GUMBEL BUILDING

COUNTY:

Jackson

LOCATION:

801 Walnut St.
Kansas City

OWNER:

Jeanette McDonald Groves

ADDRESS:

5353 Ward Parkway
Kansas City

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 28, 1978

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

May 18, 1978

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

January 25, 1979

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The Gumbel Building, 801 Walnut, in Kansas City's Central Business District, is significant in that it is one of the earliest examples of reinforced concrete construction in the country. John W. McKecknie, the designer, was a significant Kansas City architect and a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete construction.

TAX: MO-82-00205

Gumbel Building #1
Kansas City, Mo.
photographer: Paul Kivett
c. 1971

Kansas City Landmarks Commission
City Hall - 26th Floor, East
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Northwest corner of building,
looking southeast. View shows
north facade on the right and
west facade on the left.



Gumbel Building #2
Kansas City, Mo.
photographer: Paul Kivett
c. 1971

Kansas City Landmarks Commission
City Hall - 26th Floor, East
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Northeast corner of building,
looking southwest. View shows
east facade on left, north
facade on right.



Gumbel Building #3
Kansas City, Mo.
photographer: Sherry Piland
Nov. 1977

Kansas City Landmarks Commission
City Hall - 26th Floor, East
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

South facade of the building.
View looking northeast.

